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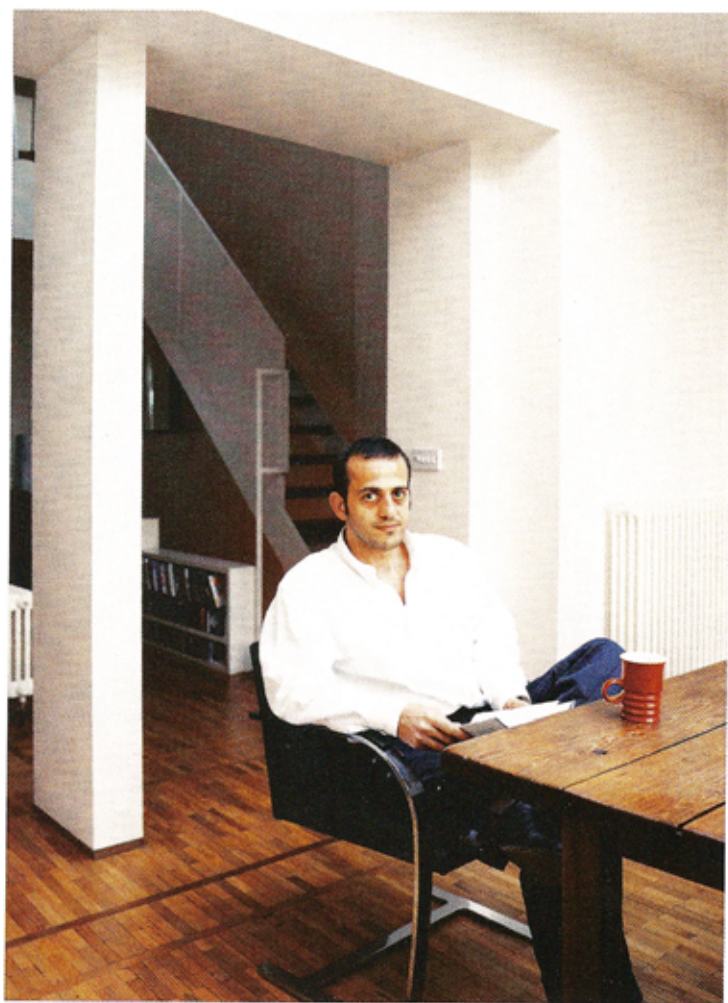


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# the new simple

This London home is a refreshing antidote to interiors excess, so pause and enjoy its charms

WORDS KATE JACOBS PICTURES SEAN MYERS

Few houses have been as carefully considered as Greek-born designer Michael Anastassiades' London home. He's been reshaping it for ten years, but still thinks of it as a work in progress. The building dates back to the 1700s, although it had been abandoned for 25 years when he found it – all original features long gone. Despite his own designer credentials, Michael wanted the input of a like-minded friend and decided to seek advice from Antwerp-based architect Wim de Mul. 'It worked because we appreciate each other's ideas,' Michael says.

Over the last decade the space has been stripped back to its boundary walls, extended to the rear and had its roof raised in order to increase the sense of space. It's a simple home, but one that's full of unexpected features that keep on giving the more you spend time there. It's the interiors equivalent of the slow food movement: take time to prepare, take time to enjoy... 'It was a slow process because we worked without pre-set plans,' says Michael, 'so a lot of it evolved as we went along. Things took unexpected directions because living in a place is always different to what you initially imagine.' In fact, many of the house's features were happy accidents. Having lived with unfinished plaster for two years, Michael grew to love the colour and opted for a plaster-inspired shade of paint when he came to decorate. And the beautiful wooden floor of the upper storeys literally came to him. 'They were dismantling a nearby building and a contractor asked if I wanted to buy some of their old mahogany flooring!'

On top of these basics sits a careful selection of furniture, united by quality materials – wood, leather, stone, metal, marble – and a utilitarian feel: 'I don't like plastic, it's not an honest material. And I don't like furniture that shouts – I like it to be discreet.' So to his collection of mostly Thirties and Forties Modernist pieces, Michael has added his own designs, from lighting to stools and vases. But crucially, this look is not about a return to minimalism. It's about having 'stuff' in the right quantities so that you can appreciate each piece without feeling weighed down. As Michael explains, 'It's important to take your time and look for exactly the right pieces to fit your space.'

Michael Anastassiades ([www.michaelanastassiades.com](http://www.michaelanastassiades.com));

Wim de Mul ([www.awdm.be](http://www.awdm.be))

## ABOUT THE OWNER

Michael Anastassiades' work is difficult to categorise. After training as a civil engineer, he headed to London's Royal College of Arts to study for a masters degree in industrial design. Michael then went on to set up his own practice in 1994, producing highly conceptual (and very beautiful) objects for the home, which blur the boundary between design and fine art. 'People find it easier to label you as a crafts person or an artist, but to me a creative person is a creative person – period,' he says. Michael's work spans everything from pieces of jewellery to whole fashion shows, with clients including Swarovski, Hussein Chalayan and Rosenthal. 'I enjoy changes and new challenges – I don't feel any limitation at all. I just apply my way of thinking to whatever I'm working on.'

**Portrait** Designer Michael Anastassiades sits in the extension he added to the rear of his Waterloo home

**Kitchen** The mahogany floor is reclaimed. It had originally been laid in a herringbone pattern but Michael put his own stamp on it with this brickwork-like design. The units were made in mahogany to fit in with the floor. The kitchen was designed to be as unobtrusive as possible so that it doesn't jar with the living area it leads into. The wooden occasional table with built-in light is one of Michael's designs. His love of tubular steel is reflected in this original Thirties sofa from an old antiques store on London's Westbourne Grove ➤









'I was looking for a chandelier to hang in the stairwell but came up with this design myself instead. It's made of bronze and incandescent light tubes – I like their linearity and the warm yellow glow they give'

**Dining area** The view from Michael's dining area extension through to the living area, via the kitchen. The large simple wooden table was another of the house's happy accidents – a gift from Michael's aunt. 'Initially, it wasn't my ideal choice, but I like having it here,' he says. On it sits a collection of Michael's 'Mirror Vases'

**Chair** The 'Mirror Chair' was part of a collection Michael designed for an installation at hip Paris store Colette: 'The idea was that you sit facing it so that you have company, even when you're dining alone'

**Light** Michael designed the light especially to fit this space above the living area, which is viewed from the bedroom ➡









'The "Ball Vases" are intended as vessels, but look more like bowling balls – I like that ambiguity. And being solid bronze, their weight adds another dimension when you pick them up'

**Living area** The TV sits on a laminated 'Laccio' table with tubular steel base by Marcel Breuer for Knoll. Behind stands a piece by Michael's photographer friend Tatiana Karapanagioti, and Michael's 'Plank' light, a shiny monolith of lacquered wood topped with an incandescent light tube, while on the floor is a collection of his solid bronze 'Ball Vases'

**Studio** Situated on the ground floor, this is where Michael creates his designs and also practices his passion, yoga. Part of the floor flips up to reveal storage for his work below.

The desk is by Charles Eames for Vitra, while the chair was found in a skip

**Shelves** On Michael's work shelves sits a collection of his 'Apollo' tableware made for Greek porcelain manufacturers Ionia. Below it are early prototypes for a 'huggable atomic mushroom' named 'Priscilla' after a 1967 explosion in Nevada and designed in collaboration with Dunne & Raby London design practice – it's now in the permanent collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The remaining items are inspirational bits and pieces ➡➡









'In yoga, people often sit on a slightly elevated surface like a cushion. But unlike a cushion, my "Meditation" stools are not something you would hide away afterwards. They're quite ornamental'

**Stairwell** Michael raised the roof of the original building to create a third storey for his bedroom suite. This is a view from this area looking down into the main living space. Above a group of his marble 'Meditation' stools hangs Michael's 'Copper Mirror 1', which was designed to look like it's protruding from the wall, not just hanging there. 'Before modern mirrors, people used polished brass, but I chose copper as it gives a warmer, more poetic reflection,' says Michael. The French metal garden chair was picked up at a now defunct antiques store in Westbourne Grove (try The French House for similar)

**Bedroom** Michael has dispensed with doors throughout his home to maintain a sense of flow – and the bedroom is no different. To separate the ensuite from the sleeping area, he opted for a simple partition – as this doesn't extend up to the ceiling, it creates the sense of a room within a room. The 'Wire' chair is by Harry Bertoia for Knoll. The portrait of Michael was painted by a friend called Alik Krikiti. For a simple clothes rail, try Habitat, but stick to co-ordinating hangers to keep the look neat



#### CONTACTS

**Colette** ([www.colette.fr](http://www.colette.fr))

**Dunne & Raby** (020 7739 1928;  
[www.dunneandraby.co.uk](http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk))

**The French House** (0870 901  
4547; [www.thefrenchhouse.net](http://www.thefrenchhouse.net))

**Habitat** (08444 991111;  
[www.habitat.net](http://www.habitat.net))

**Ionia** ([www.ionia.gr](http://www.ionia.gr))

**Knoll** (020 7236 6655;  
[www.knoll-int.com](http://www.knoll-int.com))

**Moma** ([www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org))

**Vitra** (020 7608 6200;  
[www.vitra.com](http://www.vitra.com)) **DICO**

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turn to page 188

